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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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SUBJECT: Implications of the Soviet Initiative
on Cuba

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States will refrain from intercepting Soviet ships outside the quarantine areas.

(2) The Soviets, recognizing that the prospect of withdrawing their missiles is a pre-requisite for negotiations, made the necessary offer in Khrushchev's letter of October 23 and in the concurrent approach by Soviet Counselor of Embassy Aleksander Fomin to John Scali of ABC. (b)(1) (b)(3) (X)

By these two moves the Soviets have avoided a direct confrontation with the United States, opened the avenue for talks, and at least postponed direct efforts to remove their missiles.

II. Moscow's Proposed Basis for Negotiations.

The Khrushchev letter, in its language, is not entirely clear about the settlement which is offered. The elements of the settlement are (1) a Soviet declaration that Soviet ships will not carry armaments to Cuba (aircraft and ships of other nationalities under Soviet Charter are not mentioned); (2) the United States would declare that it will not invade Cuba with US troops and will not support others who might intend to invade Cuba (i.e. the US would cease, inter alia, giving support to organized exile groups); (3) once this US declaration had been made, the need for Soviet "specialists" would disappear. At another place in the letter, Khrushchev phrases this point both more broadly and more rigorously. He says that if "assurances" were given by the President that the United States would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others, and if the United States would recall its fleet (i.e., actually call off the quarantine), "evidently" Cuba would demobilize and the question of armaments would disappear. (This language approximates that used by President Dorticos in the UN General Assembly and subsequently quoted by the Cuban UN delegate in the Security Council on October 23.)

Notice that while the Khrushchev letter itself describes two, not wholly congruent arrangements, the Fomin formula introduces several further divergencies: (1) only offensive weapons would be excluded from Cuba; (2) the offensive missile sites now in Cuba would be dismantled under UN supervision; and (3) although the US would pledge not to invade Cuba, it would apparently not pledge non-support for other forces attempting to

invade Cuba. The net impact of these divergencies is to make Khrushchev's proposals more attractive.

In addition, Fomin broached the possibility of UN inspection to ensure that no invasion was planned from Florida and other surrounding Caribbean countries. In this respect, Fomin approaches the demand for "assurances", "verbal guarantees" and "satisfactory proof" raised by Dostoev and vaguely echoed in one of Khrushchev's variants.

(b)(1)
(a)(3)
(a)(5)

What Moscow seems to be suggesting is the removal of at least the offensive weapons from Cuba (i.e., those whose introduction triggered the US quarantine) in exchange for a US commitment to desist from the use of force against Castro.

The uncertainties and omissions in the Soviet proposals, which are dealt with in Part IV below, are to be expected in an initial approach designed to bring about negotiations. It was presumably Fomin's assignment to stimulate US interest in Khrushchev's own imprecise formulations by adding some specifics, especially on the inspection issue which Moscow knows is central for the US.

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(a)(3)
(a)(5)

The fact that, contrary to expectations, the Soviets do not seek to link the Cuba issue with extraneous matters, such as the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy, adds interest to the Soviet approach.

We conclude that Moscow intends its approach to be taken seriously as an offer to negotiate on the question of the Soviet missiles in Cuba. However, the USSR has put forward only the outlines of an arrangement -- and rather general, and at times confusing outlines at that. There is no Soviet offer to remove the missiles until after the US gives certain assurances and the precise nature of the required assurances remains uncertain.

In Khrushchev's view, his latest initiative can accomplish (1) at least a temporary stand-off on the quarantine issue, with the danger of incidents minimized, and (2) the continued presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba while negotiations proceed in which numerous important details remain to be settled. In other words, what he is seeking is a situation in which the removal of the missiles is not a pre-condition but an object of negotiation. And the outcome of those negotiations remains uncertain.

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III. Motivations Behind the Soviet Initiative.

If the Soviets find themselves compelled to agree on a formula which -- essentially -- results in the withdrawal of their missiles, bombers, and military technicians from Cuba in exchange for nothing more than our commitment not to invade or support invasion of Cuba, it is difficult to see how they can regard this as anything but a serious setback. Moscow will, of course, still claim a victory, asserting that the US has been forced by Soviet power to abandon the cherished goal of invading Cuba and destroying "Communist" Cuba. But the truth will be plain to all and not least to Castro -- the USSR will have accepted less than the status quo ante. If this is so, why have the Soviets advanced a proposition which we, on our part, would presumably not have regarded as worth advancing for serious consideration in the Kremlin? The inescapable conclusion is that Khrushchev, if he really envisions agreement on this basis, is frightened of the prospect of an escalating confrontation.

If, on the other hand, Khrushchev does not intend the proposed negotiations to lead to agreement, it can be argued that he is not really backing down but only playing for time by delaying the moment of explicit confrontation. The main advantage, in addition to political ones, that two weeks or a month would confer on the Soviets is greater operational readiness of the IREM sites in Cuba and achievement of an IREM capability. Such an advantage is not decisive in the unlikely event Khrushchev were contemplating a first strike at the US. It could conceivably, however, represent that amount of additional threat to the mainland which, in the Soviet view, might give Moscow greater freedom of action in Berlin, for example. If this is so, the present gambit could represent a Soviet effort to ensure a planned increment of power against the time when we were confronted with a Soviet challenge not in the Cuban context. In other words, Khrushchev might prefer to face us with the kind of challenge we offered to him by the blockade in a different arena where he has the local advantage. To do so, he must buy time in Cuba and would thus not be acting from fright.

We find it difficult to judge whether Khrushchev is frightened or shrewdly playing for time. His overt actions

[REDACTED]

are compatible with either thesis. We find it difficult to believe, however, that he ordered the massive and rapid Cuban military buildup only to bargain it away for a US promise not to invade. If this judgment is correct, it would be dangerous to assume that Khrushchev's offer to negotiate is aimed at an early agreement on terms which on their face offer him astonishingly little.

But if altruism is not a Soviet failing, miscalculation might be. Whatever the reason, prudence suggests that an essential pre-condition for negotiations must be either that the Soviets stop work on the missile sites or that there be a very short deadline on the negotiations themselves. The first IRBM site at Guanajay is expected to have an emergency operational capability on November 15; the other sites will have a similar capability by December 1.

Part IV. Problems and Pitfalls in Negotiations.

The United States must anticipate the following problems and pitfalls in dealing with Soviet initiative:

(1) Although Moscow is suggesting the removal of at least the offensive weapons from Cuba, the precise sequence of steps by which such an arrangement would be effected is left unclear.

(2) Neither Khrushchev [nor Fomin] deal with the problem of Cuban aggression or subversion in Latin America. (b)(6) (c)(7)

(3) A Castro assurance not to accept offensive weapons means either constant and indefinite surveillance of Cuba or the opening up of Cuban society, which is incompatible with the Communist system.

(4) Can the United States continue unilateral surveillance?

(5) What do the Communists mean by effective guarantees that the US will not invade Cuba? Will they make inspection of Florida and the Caribbean area a condition and is this condition acceptable politically?

(6) What kind of relations would the US be able to maintain with the Cuban exiles?

(7) Is it politically feasible for the US in effect to guarantee the permanence of the Castro regime?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(8) Is the maintenance of Guantanamo compatible with the guarantee of Cuban "integrity"?

(9) Would the US be precluded from taking action in the other contingencies listed in the President's September 13 speech?

(10) Since Khrushchev will not distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons, what assurances do we have that bombers will be removed as well as missiles?

[REDACTED] OADR

[REDACTED]

The Immediate Circumstances

Alexander Fomin, Counselor of the Soviet Embassy, has made a practice of lunching with John Scali, ABC correspondent assigned to the State Department. On October 26, Fomin telephoned Scali, urgently requesting an appointment for lunch. At lunch, Fomin asked if State would be interested in a settlement of the Cuban crisis along the following lines: (1) Bases to be dismantled under UN supervision; (2) Castro to pledge not to develop offensive weapons in the future; and (3) US to pledge not to invade Cuba.

(b)(1)
(a)(3)
(a)(5)

Fomin said that the Cuban delegate had previously asked for such no-invasion assurances in return for dismantling, but got no reply.

Finally, Fomin asked Scali to check this formula with State and to let him know the reaction that same night, if necessary.

A check of the UN Security Council debates reveals that on October 23, the Cuban Delegate Garcia-Inchaustegui quoted a previous statement by Dorticos as follows:

"Were the United States able to give Cuba effective guarantees and satisfactory proof concerning the integrity of Cuban territory, and were it to cease its subversive and counter-revolutionary activities against our people, then Cuba would not have to strengthen its defenses. Cuba would not even need an army, and all the resources that are used for this could be gratefully and happily invested in the economic and cultural development of the country. Were the United States able to give us proof, by word and deed, that it would not carry out aggression against our country, then, we declare solemnly before you here and now, our weapons would be unnecessary and our army redundant. We believe ourselves able to create peace." (S/PV 1022 page 46).

[REDACTED]

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Scali met Fomin a second time at 7:45 p.m., October 26, and made the following statement:

"I have reason to believe that the United States Government sees real possibilities in this and supposes that the representatives of the USSR and the United States in New York can work this matter out with U Thant and with each other. My definite impression is that time is very urgent and that time is very short."

(b)(6)
(c)(1)
(c)(2)

Fomin asked several times if this came from high sources and Scali replied that it came from very high sources.

Fomin asked whether it would be possible to have UN inspectors also check American military bases in Florida and surrounding Caribbean countries. Scali replied that this was a new element and he had no official information. However, Scali said, he felt it would raise a terrible complication for President Kennedy in a period when time was of the essence.

Fomin said that this information would be communicated to the highest Soviet sources and simultaneously to Zorin, whereupon Fomin left in obvious haste.

Similar signals have also been given at the UN, and, 48 hours earlier, by the Soviet Ambassador to Indonesia.

Simultaneously with the above Khrushchev made a slightly different proposal in his latest letter. The operative paragraphs are as follows:

(1) The penultimate paragraph of Part III (Moscow's 1101):

"If assurances were given by the President and the government of the United States that the USA itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear,

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since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different."

(2) The second paragraph of Part IV:

Let us therefore show statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we, for our part, will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear."

Significantly, and contrary to expectations, Khrushchev did not seek to link the Cuban issue with such matters as the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy.

Two other points must be kept in mind. The first is the fact that both the US and apparently the USSR have accepted the U Thant proposal that for a temporary period the USSR will keep its ships out of the quarantine areas and the US will not intercept ships outside of these areas.

The second is the President's statement of September 13 in which he laid down the following three conditions:

"If [1] at any time the Communist build-up in Cuba were to endanger or interfere with our security in any way, including our base at Guantanamo, our passage to the Panama Canal, our missile and space activities at Cape Canaveral, or the lives of American citizens in this country, or [2] if Cuba should ever attempt to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force against any nation in this hemisphere, or [3] become an

offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DRAFT LETTER [REDACTED]

OADR

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have carefully read your letter of October 26 and I find in it some encouragement.

You must be fully aware of the position of the United States concerning recent events, and I do not believe that further explanation or justification is required.

You have said that we must be frank with each other and with this I fully agree. You must understand that if there exists a threat to world peace today, it is due to the reckless and secret introduction of ballistic missiles into Cuba. No amount of rationalization about defensive versus offensive missiles can obscure this stark fact. Now you can have no doubt that the course which the United States has taken with the support of the Organization of American States and others outside this hemisphere have the sole purpose of terminating the offensive threat introduced into this hemisphere.

I am gratified that the arms shipments to Cuba have been suspended. So long as this decision stands and incidents at sea can be avoided there is a chance the peace can be maintained.

We have both agreed to the Acting Secretary General

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proposal. I am disturbed, however, at the apparent inconsistency between the Acting Secretary General's proposal that "Soviet ships already on their way to Cuba . . . stay away from the interception area" and the indication in your letter to me that certain of your ships will still continue to Cuba. I feel that prompt clarification of your position is in our mutual interest.

While I welcome these indications that you intend to suspend further dangerous military shipments to Cuba, I regret that your letter does not suggest that you will promptly dismantle the missiles already in Cuba. In fact, I must note that work on these missile sites continues at a rapid pace.

You suggest in your letter that under certain circumstances your "specialists" in Cuba might disappear. I presume you mean by this that the weapons manned and serviced by these "specialists" would be returned to the Soviet Union, too. I would welcome your clarification of this.

What is urgently important is that the offensive weapons now in Cuba, which upset the world military balance and threaten world peace, should be immediately removed. There can be no doubt that any normalization of the situation in the Caribbean and, indeed, any

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(a)(1)

(b)(1)

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Improvement in general world relations can occur only
if these weapons are immediately dismantled.

Consultation with the Acting Secretary General
of the United Nations is already taking place. I believe
that this consultation should proceed rapidly to insure
that the threat of offensive weapons now in Cuba is
ended and that normal conditions can be restored in
this hemisphere and in the world.

(b)(1)
(a)(5)

(b)(1)

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